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President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 37 *(continued)*

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/220)

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/54/45 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Draft decisions I, II and III (A/54/45, para. 71 and Corr.1); and IV (A/54/45/Add.1, para. 6)

Mr. Moura (Brazil): Less than five years ago heads of State and Government and high-level authorities of 186 countries met in Copenhagen and adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action that are considered a new social contract of worldwide scope.

While we still do not have a full assessment of the implementation of the Copenhagen decisions, clearly the global environment has undergone significant change — and not always for the better, especially in relation to the crucial problems of unemployment and poverty.

Over these last few years the world community has experienced the opportunities and the risks associated with an increasingly globalized and interdependent world. The international financial crisis has caused severe social dislocation in many countries. We continue to suffer the consequences of protectionist trade practices that impact negatively in particular commodity exports of developing countries. We feel the effects of the external debt that is draining scarce resources urgently needed for development, and we see the consequences of cutbacks in international cooperation.

As we approach the year 2000 special session of the General Assembly on Copenhagen + 5, let us bear these facts in mind so as to better focus our discussions on the challenges ahead. Under Chile's competent coordination, the preparatory process for the special session is well advanced. The decision to reaffirm the Copenhagen commitments and the consensus that came out of the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee bode well.

Social development requires sustained economic growth. In Brazil — as a result of macroeconomic stability over the last few years — a significantly greater proportion of our population has shared in the benefits of development. Yet only by assuring long-term stability will the complex social evils that have long plagued Brazil be overcome.

In the quest to improve living conditions for all Brazilians, fundamental structural reforms are being carried out. The State machinery is undergoing basic re-engineering, fiscal reform is under way and basic

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social services are being reorganized. Education has received special attention. I recall that during the preparatory work for the Copenhagen Summit Brazil advocated the inclusion of universal access to education as one of the 10 commitments necessary to achieve social development. By means of its "All children in school" programme, Brazil has achieved 96 per cent school enrolment for children between 7 and 14 years old. More important, drop-out and repetition rates have fallen significantly.

As regards health matters, the various programmes recently set up have contributed to a 45 per cent reduction in infant mortality country-wide in the 1994 to 1998 period.

The eradication of poverty and the overcoming of social exclusion are Government priorities. As a result of specifically targeted policies, the proportion of people living below the absolute poverty line has declined from 30.4 per cent to 20.9 per cent.

Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this context, we have witnessed the success of initiatives that reinforce governmental action. Such is the case of the "Comunidade Solidária", which set out to forge partnerships with civil society organizations. Its basic premise is that only through joint action involving the different levels of Government and the different segments of civil society will it be possible to eradicate poverty and put an end to social exclusion.

These are a few examples of the many initiatives under way in Brazil to improve social security, provide employment opportunities, generate new income sources and promote agrarian reform. A detailed report on these programmes will be submitted to the Commission for Social Development, which was mandated to assess the progress made and the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit.

Although much progress has been made, a long and difficult road still lies ahead. Among the obstacles that persist, many are no doubt of an internal nature. Despite their complexity and the economic difficulties that constrain public policy, the Brazilian Government is committed to the goals set in this field. Such is the case of the administrative, fiscal and social security reforms presently under way. Yet there remain other obstacles that stem from the current adverse international environment, and therefore require a joint commitment to action from all countries.

If we are to achieve the goals drawn up in Copenhagen we should all work together. In Geneva in the year 2000 we will have a further opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to social development so as to translate it into concrete measures for the benefit of all in our society.

Mr. Sergiva (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its support for the statement made by the representative of Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development has made the world aware of social development issues and helped them to become an integral part of national, regional and international plans and programmes for development. It also recognized that human beings were the focal point and object of development efforts. And it invited all States throughout the world to recognize their responsibility for the social development of their peoples and for increased efforts to improve their quality of life and to guarantee prosperity through the eradication of poverty. These efforts are essential to the stability of the international community and to the creation of full and productive employment and social integration, so that people in all social sectors will be able to take part in development and in decision-making.

The developing countries have recognized their primary responsibility for national social development. They have made significant efforts to fulfil their commitments under the Copenhagen Programme of Action. Nevertheless, progress has been minimal — the rich are growing richer while the poor are growing poorer. More than 1 billion people live in abject poverty; the number of unemployed is growing; and social inequities are on the increase and threaten the stability and territorial integrity of countries.

Given the close link between economic and social development, the exacerbation of the economic situation of many developing countries has led to a shortfall in the financial resources necessary for social development and thus had a negative impact on it. Aware of the challenges facing the developing countries in their efforts to meet the objectives of the Copenhagen Programme of Action, we hope that the developed countries, the international financial institutions, the development agencies of the

United Nations and other international organizations will all work to establish an equitable environment conducive to social and economic development that would guarantee an increase in official development assistance for development in order to achieve the goals of the Copenhagen Summit. It is also hoped that they would cancel or alleviate the foreign debt and its servicing, facilitate access of the products of developing countries to world markets, and offer equitable prices for their basic commodities, which have continually fallen in relation to the cost of manufactured goods.

We also need to create an international environment providing long-term concessions to developing countries for production projects, especially food projects, with international guarantees, so that these countries can respond to priorities in the area of food. The Bretton Woods institutions should be re-examined and overhauled so that the developing countries can confront their financial crises and have easier access to concessional loans in order to finance their development projects. We should not link international cooperation to the imposition of political systems for political purposes, which would run counter to the economic and social choices made by States and would violate the United Nations Charter and international law.

The President took the Chair.

We need to work to integrate the developing countries into the international economy and facilitate their access to technology and the flow of financial resources on the bilateral and multilateral levels. Certain developed countries also need to renounce all coercive measures to exert economic and political pressure on developing countries. Furthermore, we need to eliminate all the negative social and economic repercussions of globalization, which restricts the ability of the developing countries to control the world market and marginalizes their role in the international economy.

The social situation in Africa remains precarious despite the efforts of African States to fulfil the commitments they made at the Copenhagen Summit. Indeed, poverty is on the rise in most African countries, with 44 per cent of Africans living in poverty. This situation is compounded by the AIDS pandemic throughout the continent; by other endemic diseases, such as malaria; by the deterioration of health and education services; and by the foreign debt burden, which stood at $350 billion in 1998.

In this respect, my delegation supports the recommendation adopted by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000 for a comprehensive review and assessment of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. This recommendation pertains to the inclusion of the question of the acceleration of development plans in Africa and in the least developed countries, in the context of the additional initiatives that should be included in the results of the special session.

My country supports the outcome of the recommendations of the Copenhagen Summit. In the context of legislative and legal guarantees and taking into account the balance between the needs of the individual and those of society, my country has adopted several political, social and economic measures aimed at the maximum utilization of human resources and the improvement of living standards. We have guaranteed free education, including primary education, free health services and social security for widows, the disabled and the elderly. We promote the role of women in society; the protection of the family as the nucleus of society; and the protection of human rights, based on the supremacy of the rule of law and universal participation in decision-making. All this has had a positive effect on the quality of life in Libyan society, as has the provision of all basic social services, despite the coercive economic sanctions that have been imposed on the people of Libya in 1990s, caused serious human and material damage and hampered programmes and plans devoted to social development.

In conclusion, my delegation pays tribute to the efforts of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000 on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We support its recommendation aimed at adopting a global poverty-reduction target to reduce by one half the number of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015. There is no doubt that, as we enter the new millennium, the proper preparation for the special session to be held in Switzerland will allow the international community to reaffirm its political commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development, to review progress made and to consider all the obstacles and the new initiatives that aim at improving the social situation throughout the world.

Mr. Farar (United States of America): The year 2000 will mark the fifth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development. In 1995, when the Social Summit took place in Copenhagen, Vice-President Al Gore underscored the importance of "people-centred sustainable development". His words were as significant then as they are now: we cannot succeed if we treat the poor solely as passive recipients of assistance, whether for welfare, food or medical care. An approach needs to be designed that empowers people to be active partners in the management of their own fates. We have to find new links to our own people, with a Government that works better, costs less and focuses on results.

To promote sustainable development and social progress for those trapped in poverty, new ways need to be found, such as Government/private sector partnerships, technical assistance for institutional development and policy reform and support for South-South partnerships.

Economic policies cannot be divorced from the social and political context in which they function. The United States has been supportive of the trend in the international community, as well as within multilateral lending agencies, to take into account social impacts when formulating and implementing structural adjustment programmes. We welcome the fact that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recalibrated fiscal targets and has placed new emphasis on poverty reduction and the maintenance of adequate levels of social spending. We also welcome the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework initiative. It is clear that it, too, recognizes that development requires the right social and economic policies, carried out within a supportive institutional framework.

At the same time, we firmly believe that good governance is a critical element of an enabling environment. Free and regular elections, the rule of law, transparency in political processes, accountable Governments and independent and free media are basic building blocks of a stable society. At the core of our approach to social development are political and religious freedoms and respect for human rights. Our work is guided by the principle of individual initiative, sustainable development and gender equality. Human capacity development, economic growth, civil society and a safe, healthy environment form the basis of sustained development. Copenhagen reinforced the concept that poverty is substantially alleviated only through policies that promote job creation, and that workers who enjoy the protections of core labour standards are most likely to fulfil their human potential.

As a conference of commitments, the Social Summit broke new ground with a specific commitment to equality for women, paving the way for the forward-looking human rights action plan in Beijing. We must continue to pay particular attention to women. We must recognize that women disproportionately shoulder the burden of unwaged labour, such as child-rearing and family farming. We must make sure that their labour is valued and that they have equal access to essential services such as education and health care, and that they participate fully in the political, economic and social life of their communities. With this in mind, we would like to underscore the importance of providing equal opportunities for girls to receive an education, to participate in all aspects of society and to achieve success in any endeavour they choose. No doors should be closed to anyone on the basis of gender.

The United States remains committed to the goals of the Social Summit. We have made substantial progress in strengthening families by initiating programmes to connect parents to children, and through welfare-to-work projects to develop work skills that encourage our citizens to become economically independent. We have increased education funding with federal investments and have endeavoured to set educational standards. We have enhanced our health care policies to reduce infant mortality and to establish indicators of child well-being. We have adopted policies to reduce crime with such innovative projects as neighbourhood development grants. We have undertaken policies to expand employment and to reform the social welfare systems. The progress in these two areas has contributed substantially to raising the living standards of ordinary American citizens.

We still need, however, to ensure that all members of our society participate and enjoy the fruits of economic growth. We are endeavouring to create a more equitable social system, with attention to the concerns of minorities, women, youth, older persons and people with disabilities. There have been increases in the minimum wage and health insurance reform to benefit working individuals and families.

I would like to say a few words about the ageing. We are all familiar with the various demographic estimates of what the ageing population will be in the next century. They all point to people over 60 years of age as the fastest growing sub-group in the population

worldwide. We need to have policies and programmes in place that address the needs of the ageing population. We need to ensure that when we discuss issues such as poverty and human rights, that we are also including older people. We hope that the many complex and interdependent issues of longevity continue to be addressed by nations and by international organizations beyond the International Year of Older Persons.

My Government remains committed to improving the quality of life of older persons. To demonstrate our commitment, our Assistant Secretary for Aging in the Department of Health and Human Services, Jeanette Takamura, underlined the many steps we are taking to continue the momentum with which the International Year of Older Persons began.

I would like now to say a few words about the challenges of globalization.

Globalization has brought important opportunities as well as challenges to the world. As ideas and information spread more freely and investments continue to expand globally, our collective interdependence has grown. Our security and economic welfare have become increasingly intertwined. Economic and social problems in one part of the world can have rapid repercussions in another part. Globalization has contributed to raising living standards in much of the world and to unprecedented reductions in poverty in the last 25 years, the recent international financial tumult not withstanding. As we look towards the future, we can draw from the lessons of the recent past. The economies hardest hit shared key vulnerabilities, such as bad investment decisions or weak and inadequately supervised banking systems.

The financial crisis and its social impact call for a fresh look at social policies that can mitigate any negative effects of globalization. Volatility in the global economy can translate into reductions in real wages and temporary job losses. In the worst cases, some families are no longer able to afford food, clothing or shelter. To be willing to front the changes that accompany economic liberalization and globalization, families must have some confidence that a social safety net is in place to help them weather any shocks.

Let me briefly address some of the social strategies that we believe are essential for resilient growth.

The most important investment any economy can make is in its people. All families should have the opportunity to contribute to economic growth and share in its benefits. These opportunities are enhanced by Government policies that help create the environment for economic growth. Among many steps that should be taken are the establishment of clear property rights for small landholders and homeowners, elimination of discrimination in the work place and focusing government social spending on health care and basic education.

Job creation is the core of any sound social society. Small and medium enterprises typically create more jobs more quickly and flexibly than larger enterprises. An open, transparent investment climate, grounded in the rule of law, supports the creation of these businesses. Policies should be put in place to ensure fair, equitable and broad-based access to credit by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Donor coordination is also important. As stated earlier this year by Ambassador Alan Larson before the Economic and Social Council, the World Bank, regional multilateral development banks and the IMF need to work together closely to ensure that economic and social problem issues are integrated in each institution's programmes. Donors should work with borrower Governments to ensure that their programmes fit into a coherent overall development framework.

The United States has been a strong advocate of expanding debt relief provided to the poorest countries. The G-7 and other Ministers have endorsed the Cologne debt initiative to provide faster, deeper and broader debt relief under an enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) framework. This initiative will strengthen the link between debt relief and poverty reduction for qualified HIPC countries which pursue approved economic reform programmes.

In addition, President Clinton recently announced that the United States would seek to write off up to 100 per cent of the debt owed by HIPC countries, when the savings funded by such debt relief will be used by those countries to finance poverty reduction programmes and address the basic human needs of their people. The United States is hopeful that other creditor countries will join in this extra effort.

As President Clinton said at the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council meeting in New Zealand, we must continue our efforts to put a face on the global economy. Working with the World Bank and regional development banks, we must strengthen safety nets so

people have unemployment insurance and job training and so that impoverished children are not the first and hardest-hit victims of an economic downturn. The IMF now has special financing available to help a country head off a financial contagion — something the United States worked very hard to set up. We must continue to develop such tools.

President Clinton also stressed in New Zealand that emerging economies have to work to do this. They still have to continue to restructure their banking systems, make their corporations more accountable, reduce reliance on short-term loans and encourage greater direct investment. Developed countries and international financial institutions also need to do more to increase transparency, strengthen risk management and increase disclosure by financial institutions.

While all of these are very important measures and recommendations, we would like once again to underscore the primal importance of good governance and the rule of law. Corruption eats away at the vital organs of economic activity and democratic institutions, weakening the foundation on which growth is based. We believe that governance is a critical issue that needs to be addressed at international as well as national levels. The rule of law and a democratic political system in which the people determine who governs them, and how, are essential elements of a stable environment in which people can live and prosper. While international assistance and debt relief are clearly important, their positive effects depend on sound national efforts towards economic and structural reform and good governance, under which the private sector and civil society are able to play productive roles.

Finally, we need to work together and continue our efforts to improve the quality of life of our citizens as we enter the new millennium. We are prepared to work with the international community to make sure that our children can grow in a safe, healthy, and prosperous environment.

Mr. Carranza-Cifuentes (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our debate is just beginning, and I would like to restrict my remarks to a few general comments. Unlike in previous years, when we evaluated the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development in all its substantive aspects, today I shall focus on our immediate task: preparing for the special session of the General Assembly that is to deal exclusively and in depth with the evaluation.

As we all know, beginning in 1990 the United Nations promoted several high-profile conferences, some of them at the level of head of State or Government, to explore various issues that were deemed to be of priority for our countries' development. In almost all of these cases, it was decided that further meetings would be held five years later to evaluate the implementation of what had been proposed and to consider whether it would be advisable to explore additional actions and initiatives to adopt.

This was done last June, for example, regarding the Cairo Plan of Action and, only a week ago, regarding the Barbados Programme of Action. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development lend themselves particularly well to this kind of exercise. The 10 major commitments contained in the Declaration set a hierarchy of issues, thus facilitating the appraisal of accomplishments and shortcomings in its implementation at both the national and international levels.

Instead of succumbing to the temptation of negotiating a new set of commitments or a revision of what has already been set out, we must adhere to what was decided by the General Assembly in paragraph 24 of resolution 50/161:

> "to hold a special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further actions and initiatives".

In other words, the objectives of that session must be to reaffirm — not to negotiate — the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Summit.

Perhaps the confusion that might exist between these two conflicting approaches explains the disappointment of several delegations, including my own, with the progress made to date by the Preparatory Committee, which held its first substantive session last May. This disappointment is due to the fact that the main activities of the Preparatory Committee between May 1998 and September 1999 have resulted solely in the adoption of decisions that have settled basically formal issues, rather than issues of substance that, ideally, the Preparatory Committee should have addressed. We still have the substantive part ahead of us. This will be the most difficult part, and time is passing.

Although circumstances will unquestionably have changed between 1995 and 2000, we must not forget the difficulties encountered in similar processes that sought to renegotiate declarations and/or programmes of action. These processes were complicated by the emergence of an overabundance of elements that were not only new but also controversial and had been rejected at the respective Summits. This gave rise to interminable negotiating rounds whose only result was an unnecessary waste of delegations' energy.

It may be that the difficulties that the Committee is facing have also been influenced by recent relevant developments. As is well known, an indispensable condition for the fulfilment of all the objectives set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action is the existence of an enabling international economic environment. Since 1997, this requirement has not been met as regards the majority of developing countries. Rather, in the last two years we have witnessed desperate efforts in many countries, including my own, to defend jobs against a backdrop of pronounced deceleration of economic activity and to justify an increasingly large expenditure of public funds to prop up social sectors in the midst of a contraction of the capacity to generate fiscal revenues, which renders belt-tightening policies unavoidable.

The advances made in upholding the spirit of Copenhagen, negated by setbacks in a real world characterized by lower levels of economic activity, conjure in our minds the image of countries running fast just to remain in place, though they still might fall behind. But the special session will deal with all these subjects. What we should ask ourselves now is how to make progress in preparing for that session.

If we bear in mind that the General Assembly is the true embodiment of the intergovernmental process, we could expect it to provide us with a specific framework for following up the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action. This framework could be concretely defined in the Economic and Social Council and, in particular, in the Commission for Social Development.

My delegation believes that we should take maximum advantage of this opportunity. We welcome the decision designating as a high priority of the thirty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development consideration of how the Commission can contribute to a general review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. The coordinating function to be performed by the Commission at that session is of vital importance. The Commission will itself function as a coordinating body in which national reports will be presented and experience will be shared prior to the submission of the results of the Commission's work to the Preparatory Committee next February.

We believe that the Preparatory Committee should adopt a new agreed text reflecting a compilation of summaries and proposals based on documentation presented by countries and the United Nations system. It should also reflect observations and suggestions concerning progress on the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the Programme of Action prepared by the Secretariat as a contribution to the preparatory process for the special session.

In conclusion, delegations should in our view strive in the informal inter-sessional consultations of the Preparatory Committee to be able to present a new revised working text to the Committee at its second session. That text should be consistent with the objectives and also facilitate its adoption. We could thus conclude the substantive work of the special session more speedily.

Mr. Suh (Republic of Korea): Five years ago we gathered in Copenhagen in search of ways to improve the lot of all the world's inhabitants in the years to come. The World Summit for Social Development, whose guiding philosophy was to place the needs and rights of human beings at the centre of all our policies, culminated in the adoption of three core goals: poverty eradication, full employment and social integration.

Since that time, however, those goals have proved elusive. The end of the cold war ushered in a new era with perils of its own; armed conflicts have erupted in many parts of the world, threatening the development of our societies. As witnesses to these appalling scenes, we must recognize that peace and reconciliation are essential to achieving the goals of Copenhagen. In this regard, it is imperative that we in the United Nations and the international community marshal our resources in the service of the prevention and peaceful resolution of all conflicts.

Another challenge of the new era is globalization. Although the tide of globalization sweeping our world has opened up tremendous new avenues of opportunity, it has also exacerbated economic and social disparities. In addition, our growing interdependence has made crises

such as the economic turmoil of the past few years virtually impossible to contain.

It must be noted that the problems we are tackling fall especially hard on one particularly vulnerable segment of the population: women. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and lack of social integration, and the challenges of the new era threaten them with further marginalization. Our policy initiatives must therefore place special emphasis on women's issues, which form an integral part of the social development process.

Now that we have set our goals, we must identify the obstacles that lie in our path towards social development, for only then can we devise strategies for surmounting them. In this regard, my delegation is optimistic that the special session next year in Geneva and its preparatory process will provide forums for the fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences between Member States and non-governmental organizations.

While the importance of efforts on the international and regional levels cannot be overemphasized, the primary responsibility for social development lies with nations themselves. The issues we have defined as core goals are profoundly personal, touching our lives as few other issues can. For that reason, our efforts must take place close to the ground, where they can target both the roots and the ramifications of the problems.

The Republic of Korea has made enormous strides in social development over the past 50 years. Although at times certain areas of social development took a back seat to the pursuit of economic growth, the nation made significant progress and did so at a remarkably swift pace. In 1997, however, economic crisis struck, undoing many of our hard-won achievements. The needy and vulnerable were hit particularly hard, and the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" widened further, threatening our nation's social integration.

But, thanks to the persistent efforts of both the Government and the people to overcome the economic crisis, the nation's economy is once again expanding, and the widespread view is that the worst is now over. Projections call for economic growth of around 7 per cent this year, in contrast with last year's 5.8 per cent contraction. Having the economy back on track will further our social development aims and lend new momentum to our efforts.

Recognizing that structural flaws were at the root of the economic crisis, the Government of the Republic of Korea is carrying out bold reforms in four key sectors: financial, corporate, public and labour. By strengthening autonomy, transparency and accountability in those sectors, the Government hopes to promote the principles of democracy and the market economy, allowing them to flourish throughout our society.

In addition to undertaking structural reform, my Government is launching innovative, forward-thinking welfare initiatives. Among these projects is the "Vision for National Health and Welfare towards the Year 2000" announced this year on National Liberation Day. The aim of this project is twofold: first, to incorporate social development goals into our reform programmes, and, secondly, to promote the concept of "productive welfare". Conventional welfare involves little more than handouts; productive welfare revolutionizes the concept, seeking not only to improve the quality of life for recipients, but to enhance their abilities as well by providing greater access to education, health care and housing. Thus enabled, welfare recipients can participate in, and contribute to, society more fully.

The Republic of Korea is also striving to find ways to redress economic and social disparities on a regional level. At this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, for example, President Kim Dae-jung proposed that APEC member States conduct a policy dialogue in Seoul next year entitled "Seoul Forum: Towards New Prosperity and Harmony for APEC". The Korean Government is confident that this forum will provide an invaluable opportunity for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to share their particular responses to the recent economic crisis and thereby devise ways to prevent future crises.

At the international level, my Government will continue to increase its official development assistance to developing countries, which has been expanding since 1995. Despite the financial constraints placed upon us by the economic crisis, the Republic of Korea is also working to fulfil the commitment we made at the World Summit for Social Development to provide technical training to developing countries. International aid enabled us to overcome poverty and build a foundation for sustainable development in our nation-building process; it is now our turn to lend a helping hand.

The great achievement of the World Summit for Social Development was to establish clear-cut goals. Our task now is to assess the progress we have made so far and to ensure that the ideals of Copenhagen are translated into concrete, realistic action. Given that political, economic and social problems are inextricably intertwined, our approach must be comprehensive in scope and innovative in nature. To achieve our goals, we must harness the positive elements of globalization and utilize diverse forces with a global reach, such as the mass media, the private sector and civil society — including, *inter alia*, non-governmental organizations. This broad-based campaign requires strong leadership, however, and my delegation therefore urges the United Nations to use its universal mandate to continue spearheading our efforts.

As we cast off the old legacy of the cold war and look ahead to the dawning of the new millennium, we stand poised at a historic juncture in our social development process. The special session in Geneva thus promises to be a pivotal event at which we can both look back over the past five years and refine and redouble our efforts as we prepare for the challenges that await us. For our part, the Republic of Korea pledges to do its utmost in support of this vital and worthwhile endeavour, and we will contribute fully to the special session and its preparatory processes.

In taking stock of the progress we have made since Copenhagen, let us assess our achievements and shortcomings with a critical eye, for the direction we take now will shape the coming era.

Ms. Partiban (Malaysia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

It has been four years since leaders from 117 countries met at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and committed themselves to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development to promote social progress, social justice, human betterment and social integration at the national, regional and international levels. This was to be achieved through actions to enhance social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups, the alleviation and reduction of poverty and the expansion of productive employment.

The United Nations is now in the midst of preparing for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit, which will take place in June 2000 in Geneva. In this regard, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Preparatory Committee for the work it has done, as reported in document A/54/45 and Add.1.

My delegation strongly agrees with the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee that the objective of the special session should be to reaffirm the commitments made in Copenhagen and not to renegotiate the terms agreed. The special session is expected to identify the progress made thus far and the constraints and limitations faced by countries in carrying out their commitments, as well as the lessons drawn from the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration at the national, regional and international levels.

Malaysia is fully committed to poverty eradication, full employment and social integration. At the national level, the implementation of the Programme of Action on Social Development, as advocated by the Social Summit, is not something new for Malaysia, as almost all of its measures are already incorporated in broadly supported Government policies and programmes. In addition, the administrative machinery and processes for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of those policies and programmes are already well in place and functioning effectively.

Malaysia's implementation of the 10 commitments made at the Social Summit is well under way. The Government has taken measures to ensure that a conducive environment exists for social development. The seventh Malaysia Plan, for the years 1996 to 2000, has outlined measures and review policies and programmes relating to matters that are the focus of the Social Summit. Existing administrative mechanisms will be used to ascertain Malaysia's achievement levels in social development over time.

Through its socio-economic policies and programmes in social development, Malaysia has successfully lowered the rate of absolute poverty from 60 per cent in 1970 to 13.5 per cent in 1999. The country is making further efforts to reduce this to 5.5 per cent by the year 2000. On the other side of the equation, the mid-term review of the seventh Malaysia Plan has reported that the household income of Malaysians has increased by 13.9 per cent. In fact, Malaysia is currently enjoying full employment, as a result of its economic growth policies and equitable distribution strategies. Malaysia has also been able to galvanize the capabilities of both the private and public sectors, and to have these two sectors

complement each other to achieve growth with equity. In Malaysia we call this smart partnership.

The seventh Malaysia Plan retains and re-emphasizes the concept of balanced development, first introduced in 1991 as a major feature of the National Development Programme. Serious attention is given to strategies for generating sustainable, rapid economic growth as well as to ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are equitably shared among Malaysians, irrespective of ethnic group, state or residence in rural or urban areas. Apart from providing equitable growth, the Plan also focuses on the need to balance growth with the protection of the environment and Malaysia's natural resources.

The allocation for social development programmes represents 13.1 per cent of Malaysia's total development budget. The allocation for housing, health and other social services programmes has been increased in line with the greater emphasis by the Government on maintaining the quality of life and reducing the impact of the economic crisis on the poor and on vulnerable groups. In this context, Malaysia has introduced several programmes to assist the very poor who are unable to obtain small, interest-free loans without collateral or a guarantor. One example is the Government-funded *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia*, or Malaysian Resourcefulness Fund, which is similar in concept to the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. The Government will continue to undertake measures to extend social programmes, particularly in providing basic services and amenities so as to reduce the full negative impact of the economic slowdown on low-income households.

With regard to international cooperation for social development, Malaysia will continue to share its expertise and experiences in human resource development with other developing countries in the context of South-South cooperation, through its Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programmes.

We all agree that the eradication of poverty is central in the international community's efforts to enhance social and economic development worldwide. To this end, the international community must endeavour to fund and provide additional resources to assist the developing countries in their development efforts. We call upon the developed countries to live up to their commitment to contribute 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to development assistance for the developing countries. We also urge that they continue to assist the developing countries in providing new and additional resources for them to undertake their social programmes, such as human development programmes, education and health training.

Preliminary assessments of the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit have shown uneven responses, varying greatly between countries and even between different commitments within the same country. Not all countries have placed the same kind of priority on the various commitments of the Copenhagen Summit because of differing situations and needs. Many developing countries face serious obstacles in their efforts to achieve the goals of the Summit due to civil strife, natural disasters or a lack of financial resources. Needless to say, countries that are burdened by debt repayment will be hard-pressed to allocate substantial amounts for social development. Political instability and civil strife are also an impediment to a nation's ability to promote social development. More often than not, in developing countries, it is not the lack of commitment to development which is missing, but rather the lack of resources — human or material — and international support. Sincere commitments on the part of developed countries to assist the developing countries will definitely enhance the efforts of the latter in eliminating social and economic inequalities and imbalances.

As rightly noted by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, achieving the goals established at the Summit will be a lengthy and very complicated process. Concerted and coordinated efforts by international institutions, national Governments and non-governmental organizations will be required to ensure that these commitments are translated into concrete results. The international community must persevere in facing these challenges so that humanity will be better off in the new millennium.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Let me state at the outset that Namibia associates itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, which adequately reflected the concerns of the developing countries with regard to the agenda item under discussion.

The World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995, was a firm indication of the international community's resolve that social development would be at the top of the political agenda of Governments. Accordingly, it is imperative that people must be the

centre and focus of the development process, in keeping with the commitments made at the Summit.

Based on the issues that have dominated recent world conferences and summits — the protection of the environment, human rights and promoting women's right to social development — poverty has emerged as the central issue. In view of the reality that widespread, crippling poverty in most developing countries will be a factor in determining the success or failure of any development initiative, the reduction of poverty and its companion threat to the well-being of entire societies is a necessary condition for development.

We are only a few months from the five-year review of the implementation of the Social Summit. Indications of how we have fared at this stage in the developing world, and particularly on the African continent, are not encouraging.

I wish to share with this body some grim statistics on the situation in Africa which were included in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. It is estimated that 44 per cent of Africans as a whole, and 51 per cent of those in sub-Saharan Africa, live in absolute poverty. Africa's debt burden in 1998 stood at $350 billion, an amount equivalent to over 300 per cent of all exports of goods and services. Africa received $4.7 billion in foreign direct investment in 1997, representing a mere 3 percent of global flows. Even then, such inflows are highly concentrated in a few countries and are largely in gas, petroleum and other mining activities.

In addition to the debt burden, structural adjustment policies and a lopsided international economic environment have stunted, and in some cases eliminated, growth in African countries over the past decade. The economic structures in most African countries, which are heavily weighted towards commodities, leave the economies in that region highly vulnerable to the volatility of international commodities markets and ill-prepared to become part of the global economic scene.

Financing Africa's development is crucial. There is a tremendous need to improve our people's access to basic social services, particularly education and health, and to develop the infrastructure. In addition to those basic needs, the successful resettlement and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons from chronic and sporadic conflicts across the continent requires massive investment.

While Governments have the primary responsibility to work towards the development of our countries, our people must in turn be provided with an enabling environment that would foster growth. But the prospects for domestic resource mobilization in Africa remain bleak, given the limited or non-existent savings and pervasive poverty levels. In order to meet the requirements of domestic resource mobilization to strengthen the fragile economies in Africa and reduce poverty there, current levels of external funding sources, such as official development assistance and foreign direct investment, need to be increased.

The process of reviewing the progress made and the obstacles encountered in implementing the Social Summit Programme of Action provides us with the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the full implementation of the commitments made in Copenhagen. Namibia is satisfied with the progress achieved by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives during its first meeting in May 1998, as well as at the inter-sessional meeting held earlier this year. The results of those meetings provide a good basis on which to continue the preparatory process.

As we look forward to Geneva 2000, several key initiatives call for special attention. The core of this renewed attention should be the need to refocus macroeconomic policies; to centralize social goals and priorities and place them on a par with economic priorities; to strengthen procedures and institutions for social dialogue; to strengthen gender mainstreaming and promote gender equality nationally and internationally; and to strengthen support for activities to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The *1997 Report on the World Social Situation* clearly stated that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is responsible for declining life expectancy in 15 African countries. Inevitably, the greatest toll has been among young adults, and many countries not only have suffered devastating losses through a decline in economic activity but have been forced to make difficult choices about how much of their limited resources should be used for the prevention and treatment of diseases.

The task ahead is gigantic, and Geneva 2000 is an appropriate first step in dealing with the challenge of issues that can no longer remain far removed from the consideration of the shrinking global village. Namibia

fully supports the work of the Preparatory Committee, and we remain confident that such foresight will create a solid foundation for a better world as we enter the new millennium.

Mr. Iqbal (Pakistan): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.

This debate is taking place at a time when the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly has already started its review process of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. At its first substantive session, in May this year, the Preparatory Committee requested the United Nations system and other concerned organizations to submit their assessments of the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. We look forward to an early submission of those reports, as they will richly contribute towards a comprehensive review process and help in identifying further initiatives.

The holding of the Social Summit in 1995 was a manifestation of the international community's deep concern about the worsening world social situation. It also reflected recognition of the new development paradigm that a human person must be both an active participant and a beneficiary of the development process and that a link must be created between economic growth and improving human lives. For the realization of this new vision, the Copenhagen Summit identified three core objectives as priority areas: poverty eradication; the generation of full employment; and social integration. This new vision of development instilled hope and optimism into millions of unemployed and poverty-stricken people across the globe.

Ironically, the initial review of the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit carried out by the Commission for Social Development and the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee early this year have belied all of that optimism. The assessment suggests that despite increased focus on poverty eradication and employment-generation strategies, all efforts to achieve social development objectives, particularly in developing countries, remain largely unfulfilled. In some instances, the situation has actually deteriorated, as unemployment and poverty have increased. In 1993 the number of people living below the poverty line was 1.3 billion; it has now increased to 1.5 billion.

Income disparity between world's richest and poorest has also escalated. The United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report 1999* has estimated that the income ratio between the one fifth of the people living in the richest countries of the world and the one fifth living in the poorest countries has reached 74 to 1, as compared with 60 to 1 in 1990. Similarly, 20 per cent of the highest-income countries control 86 per cent of world gross domestic product, 81.2 per cent of world trade, 94.6 per cent of all commercial lending and 94 per cent of all research and development.

Conversely, of 4.4 billion people in the developing countries, approximately three fifths lack basic sanitation; one third have no access to clean drinking water; and one fifth have no access to even moderate medical facilities. Similarly, 130 million children, 80 per cent of them girls, remain out of school; more than 100 million children under the age of five are gravely malnourished; and every year there are approximately 8 million preventable deaths among children. This contrast is indeed frustrating.

We live in a world of shrinking distances and increasing disparities. We are told that the phenomenon of globalization presents new opportunities and challenges. However, in reality, ruthless competition among market forces has worked to the detriment of the developing countries by pushing them further towards the periphery of the world economy. In the cut-throat competition for profit and markets, the poor people from developing countries have become sacrificial lambs. The negative effects of globalization, coupled with declining commodity prices, the adverse impact of the external debt burden and structural adjustment programmes, declining official development assistance flows and systematic biases in the international trading and financial systems have strangulated the developing countries' capacity to generate resources for investment in the social sector.

An added problem has been the phenomenon of the brain drain from developing countries to greener pastures in the developed world. This has implications even more serious than economic constraints. In an age of knowledge, the age of the information revolution, it is becoming impossible for the developing countries to maintain competitiveness in services and other sectors due to the drain of talented, trained and professional manpower. The reason is simple: they are unable to offer attractive incentives to these highly trained professionals.

As the paradigm of knowledge changes from pen-based to computer- and information-technology-based literacy, there is a fear of an "information apartheid" emerging in the next century. At the end of the twentieth century, the world has taken care of political apartheid, but as the new millennium dawns we stand on the threshold of another danger: that, owing to great disparities in the information technology and knowledge areas, there could be an information apartheid which in the next century could affect the developing countries particularly if immediate steps are not taken to bridge the knowledge and technology gap. Before the industrial revolution, the difference between the richest and the poorest countries could be expressed as a ratio of 1 to 5; at the end of the twentieth century, as the industrial revolution matures, the difference has increased to a ratio of 1 to 400. There is a danger that, if measures are not taken, the information revolution will increase that difference from 1 to 400 to one to several thousand. All these issues deserve in-depth reflection by the Preparatory Committee, with a view to suggesting further appropriate initiatives for the special session of the General Assembly. The imperative of globalization is that both developed and developing countries should have a common stake in future cooperation and harmony among all people, whether they live in the developed world or in the underdeveloped world.

Pakistan remains committed to the objectives of the Copenhagen Social Summit. The Government has been doing its utmost to implement Copenhagen commitments despite serious financial and economic difficulties. As part of these efforts, Pakistan launched phase two of its social action programme in 1997, with a budgetary outlay of some 500 billion rupees. The main focus of this programme has been on poverty alleviation, employment generation, the provision of universal access to education, basic health care, family planning, empowerment of women and the provision of clean drinking water in urban slums and rural areas. The national census carried out in 1998 indicated that the literacy rate in Pakistan, recorded as 27.4 per cent in 1981, has increased to 47.4 per cent. In the same period, primary-school enrolment increased by 216 per cent, secondary-school enrolment by 195 per cent, college enrolment by 174 per cent, and university enrolment by 124 per cent. The most encouraging part is that the enrolment of girls in primary schools increased during that period by 303 per cent, in secondary schools by 342 per cent, in colleges by 266 per cent, and in universities by 347 per cent. This is a matter for satisfaction, but it is only the beginning of the positive changes taking place in the social sector of Pakistan.

Pakistan recently launched its Vision 2010 programme, which aims at achieving 70 per cent literacy at the national level and at eliminating the gender gap in schools by 2010 as part of Pakistan's national strategy to prepare for the challenges of the twenty-first century and the new millennium. I am pleased to report also that on 8 September, World Literacy Day, a special primary-school enrolment day was organized in Pakistan under the Vision 2010 programme, in partnership with the community, to enrol more than 100,000 school-age children who had not been going to school. As a result of mobilization at the national level, in which everyone from the Prime Minister to local community leaders participated, more than 850,000 children were enrolled in a single day. This shows that a great social demand exists, and needs to be met. We are planning to achieve universal primary-school enrolment in the next three years. Similar community-based initiatives are being planned in the areas of health and population planning.

Pakistan has decided to undertake a thorough evaluation of the social situation in our country. We propose to hold a national-level social summit in Islamabad on 24 and 25 January 2000 for that purpose. All the provincial departments associated with the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action, national and international non-governmental organizations and the country's leading economists and social scientists are being invited to review our experience and evolve future strategy in the light of lessons learned both nationally and internationally. We look forward to sharing the outcome of this national endeavour with other Member States during the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, in April 2000, and during the special session of the General Assembly, in Geneva in June 2000.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Before the decade that is now coming to a close, the international community had never so thoroughly understood the global nature of the challenges facing it — especially those in the social sphere, in which it had never taken a great interest. Suddenly, conferences and summits followed one another at a steady pace, with their concomitant declarations and programmes of action, as though the international community had realized that it had shamefully forgotten that the human being must be at the centre of its concerns and was trying to make up for lost time. Women, population and social development suddenly became timely issues and topics for study and follow-up.

This has been particularly true since the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, where great numbers of heads of State or Government met four years ago to consider social questions and to adopt a Declaration and Programme of Action that has since been viewed as a universally supported social charter that can promote the creation of a national and international climate favourable to social development, to the gradual eradication of poverty and to the spread of prosperity and well-being.

Now that we have broached the five-yearly process of considering and evaluating the implementation of the Copenhagen decisions and commitments, how should we assess what we have achieved, and how much remains to be done to attain the goals we set ourselves?

A great deal certainly remains to be done: 3 billion people are living on less than $2 a day; 1 billion, including 600 million women, are illiterate; 1.4 billion have no access to basic social services; 14 million children die each year for want of medical care; more than 150 million workers are without jobs. The modest progress has been eclipsed by those frightening statistics, placed before us at the May session of the Preparatory Committee; they are a harsh reminder that the battle has not been won. Far from it: in many regions, and particularly in developing countries, there have actually been declines. Physical and emotional hardship is growing in extent and in intensity; absolute poverty is spreading; and it is uncertain when we will attain the goals we have set.

Hence, although it duly appears on the agendas of all forums that deal with development and of various summits and other conferences, the fight against poverty has not met expectations because, rather than attacking the real causes of poverty, it very often aims only at alleviating its consequences. Moreover, the fight against poverty is being waged under the most adverse conditions: an international economic environment that, for the sake of unbridled globalization, is giving ever-shorter shrift to the poorest and most vulnerable among us, and that could even permanently exclude them from the benefits of progress.

In that connection, the situation of the African continent is alarming: nearly two thirds of the least developed countries are located there; approximately half of its population lives below the threshold of absolute poverty; and its social indicators are among the lowest in the world. Despite the many initiatives of the United Nations system and the international community to support the efforts of African countries, prospects for improvement remain very remote.

Here, too, it is apparent that without a more favourable international environment, without significant financial input, without real alleviation, if not outright cancellation, of the debt and without a sustained and lasting rate of growth, the laudable and courageous efforts and the sacrifices made so far by the African countries will prove insufficient, if not useless, in the face of the great needs of the African peoples.

The World Summit for Social Development was the opportunity for the international community to solemnly reaffirm that the fulfilment of human beings is the ultimate goal of the development process. The social development objectives decided upon in Copenhagen embody not only the concerns of Algeria, but constitute the very pillars of its policies implemented since independence.

Indeed, Algeria has always integrated the social aspect into its development measures, which are based on respect for and promotion of the principles of social justice and national solidarity. The day following its independence, facing the prevailing situation, the State's constant concern was for the creation of employment, the introduction of free and mandatory education for all children, the increase of health infrastructure along with appropriate funding to provide a free health coverage for all and, finally, the setting up of a social security system for the benefit of almost the entire population.

This policy has had a beneficial effect and has brought about a considerable improvement in social indicators. The actual number of children educated at different levels has increased, and the education of girls has considerably progressed. Health coverage has grown rapidly, bringing about a reduction of the prevalence of endemic diseases because of better access to health care, because it is free and because of investments made in infrastructure for sewage systems and the distribution of drinking water.

Very attached to preserving these achievements and in spite of financial difficulties, my country has maintained this social policy, further improving the above-mentioned social indicators. The same attachment also binds Algeria to its commitments in Copenhagen, which it strives to implement through strengthened policies revolving around two axes.

First is the fight against poverty. In this context, in place of price support for consumer products, we have substituted support for the incomes of the lowest income

groups and the application of new provisions such as new social services and the creation of an agency for social development which, among other tasks, promotes, selects and finances actions and intervention on behalf of the poorest population and community development. Moreover, State social assistance, which is not new, is being extended to disabled adults and the elderly. The advantages of social security, which covers 80 per cent of the population — that is to say, all those people working, whether paid or not and including those privately employed — are also extended to those with no income, students, the disabled and widows.

The second axis is the creation of employment and professional training for young people through, among other things, the setting up of a national agency for the support of employment for young people, which is responsible for advising and working with young promoters and also manages the national fund for the support of employment for young people. Through these actions, numerous measures have been initiated to allow young people to acquire professional experience and develop their abilities, to obtain jobs not requiring expensive equipment and to help with setting up microenterprises and developing microcredit.

Moreover, and regarding the objectives established for the year 2000, we should point out that a certain number have already been reached, notably those for life expectancy, for the decrease in mortality of children under the age of five and for access to primary health care, now available to 98 per cent of the population. Also, through the policy of education for all, there is universal access to basic education for all children, including at the primary level, and including girls. This was achieved as of 1996.

Algeria wishes to express some satisfaction at being able to pursue its social policy in spite of the difficulties and trials along the way, but we bear clearly in mind the constraints that have weighed on the full realization of the results of the Summit, for complete fulfilment of which new programmes have been identified and objectives established for the years 2000 to 2005 in both economic and social areas.

It would appear that the results are not up to the hopes that arose out of the 1995 Summit. The international community must, therefore, seize the occasion offered by the special session in the year 2000 to reaffirm the commitments made in Copenhagen. In spite of their limited resources, the numerous difficulties and the immense needs they face and which continue to grow, the developing countries have made considerable efforts to fulfil their share of the commitments. Nevertheless, these efforts will remain in vain if they are not adequately supported by the developing countries' partners in development, who must also honour their commitments in conformity with the spirit and letter of Copenhagen.

On the threshold of a new millennium, the fight against poverty is clearly the main challenge to which the international community must rise in solidarity.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): At the outset, we associate ourselves with the statement of the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China.

It gives me great pleasure to participate in the Assembly's deliberations on the world community's implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the preparations for the special session in the year 2000 that will not only assess progress in implementation but also embark on new initiatives to speed up progress in implementing the Copenhagen Social Summit commitments. It is opportune because our world is entering the next millennium. We will examine the results of our individual and collective initiatives, which we mapped out at the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development and which aim to build a better, prosperous and progressive world for humankind.

In preparation for this special session, our countries have embarked on a difficult but necessary evaluation of our own national actions to implement the Copenhagen Social Summit commitments. Here in the United Nations, our preparations have started to attain full speed with the recent conclusion of the inter-sessional substantive meeting of the Preparatory Committee that took on board proposals to further implement the Summit commitments and Programme of Action.

We truly appreciate the untiring and innovative efforts of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Christian Maqueieira, to push the preparatory process forward and find solutions to difficult areas of differences. We would like to restate our confidence in his able leadership for bringing the special session to a successful conclusion.

We also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for its prompt delivery of important documentation in the earlier meetings of the Preparatory Committee. The Secretariat's role will be crucial in providing us integrated data on the progress as well as difficulties in the implementation of the Social

Summit commitments. We look forward to the continued efficiency of the Secretariat in working out realistic and effective initiatives that will hasten implementation of these commitments.

Our discussions in the substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the special session have touched on the 10 commitments and the Programme of Action of the Copenhagen Summit, and have underscored the fact that elements contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action should not be renegotiated. It is our view that there is merit to postponing discussion on the review and assessment of the implementation of these commitments pending receipt of all individual countries' evaluations of their implementation of these commitments and of an integrated appraisal of the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments by the Secretariat.

While the relevance and efficacy of our proposed further initiatives for the implementation of these commitments hinge on the results of this appraisal, as far as the developing countries are concerned, many disturbing problems remain. For example, the *Human Development Report* published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) shows that the world continues to be plagued by poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and disease. The UNDP reports that more than a billion people live in abject poverty and that the majority of these people are women. One billion people live without adequate shelter, and in the least developed countries, more than 1 in 10 infants die at birth or before their first birthday. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, nearly a billion people, two thirds of them women, will enter the twenty-first century unable to read a book or sign their names. The Secretary-General reports that about 2 million children are victims of armed conflict, and 300,000 more, who are child soldiers, may join the ranks of those who could be physically, emotionally and morally scarred for life by their experiences in war and conflict. These are not very encouraging indicators of the world's social situation, nor do they signal much progress in our actions to bring social development to every nook and cranny of the world.

In our review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Social Summit, the Philippines would like to see concerted efforts to create an enabling and favourable environment for more equitable access for all to income, resources and social services. We would like to see serious initiatives to eradicate poverty, which is essentially linked to full employment, access to health and education services, equality and equity between women and men, and the availability of required resources to achieve the goals of social development, even in times of financial crisis or budgetary tightening. In this context, the Philippines would like to see the developed countries fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. We would like to see preferential interest rates provided for social development programmes and a durable solution to the debt problem seriously explored.

The Philippine Government is seriously committed to the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. Collaborative efforts with non-governmental organizations and civil society were undertaken with the goal of achieving sustainable human development. The Government has continued to implement an integrated poverty-alleviation framework that is human-centred and based on a process of consultation and consensus-building among the various stakeholders. It has continued to pursue an employment-intensive pattern of growth that has spurred an increase in the country's gross domestic product. It has promulgated and enacted laws to prevent the exploitation of child labour, enhance the status of women in the labour force and safeguard the welfare of overseas workers, especially women. It has created "flagship programmes on livelihood" that aim to deliver microfinance services to 2 million of the poorest households by the year 2001. In short, the Philippines has continued and will continue to persevere in creating a political, economic, sociocultural environment that, it is hoped, will enable its citizens to achieve at least a modicum of human development.

As we assess the progress we have made in implementing the outcome of the Copenhagen Social Summit, there is a need to attempt to develop a common yardstick through the establishment of indicators for measuring our progress.

I wish to conclude by saying that the Philippines will uphold its commitments to social development in collaboration with all members of the international community, ever mindful that the needs and concerns of all entities and individuals of this world should be properly addressed. Social development, in this era of growing interdependence and globalization, should not benefit only a few individuals or a selected group of States. Social development is meant to benefit all peoples of all nations in the noble hope of building a brighter and better world for all of us and for generations that will come after us.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We endorse the statements made by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group. Venezuela would like to emphasize the priority that it attaches to focusing on social issues, both at the national and international levels.

We are pleased that social issues have become crucially important in the work of our Organization, and by the commitments entered into by the international community in this important area of development. The World Summit for Social Development is just a point of departure for a process by which development is finally to be linked inextricably to the human and social dimensions. By endorsing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, Venezuela committed itself to doing its best to ensure the achievement of the objectives of justice, peace and social equity that these documents promote.

Allow me to describe to the Assembly the initiatives undertaken by the Venezuela Government in recent months, on the basis of the premise that economic development must be carried out in social harmony, without excluding anyone. It must generate qualitative and sustainable growth in human development. The current Venezuelan Government considers the human being the subject and the object of development policies. Social policies will therefore become our top priority, as demanded by the reality that 80 per cent of our people live in poverty. Given this, we cannot use traditional formulas to deal with the challenges of education, health, housing and employment. Our situation demands political commitment capable of promoting, in a democratic context, a thorough and integrated review of our institutions, our policies and our attitudes as citizens.

The first stage of this process is currently being carried out by means of constitutional reform, a process that was discussed at some length by the President of Venezuela in his statement to the plenary Assembly on 21 September. At the same time, an economic transition programme for the 1999-2000 biennium has been adopted. This programme emphasizes macroeconomic stabilization, given that this is the basis on which economic growth can be revitalized, inflation — whose social effects are devastating — can be controlled, new sources of employment can be generated and the conditions of employment can be improved.

In this context Venezuela proposes to carry out a social policy aimed at changing the relationship between the economic and the social spheres. This policy would open the economy to market forces while at the same time restoring the valuable contribution of social action; it would be geared to a gradual reduction of the imbalances and inequities of our current reality and to the transformation of relations between the State and civil society; it would promote greater participation of communities in development efforts at the local and regional levels.

To deal with our current social emergency, we are trying to establish a social support network at the regional, municipal and local levels. This network would promote and ensure effective coordination of efforts in the social sphere and would be designed for the immediate implementation of a set of measures aimed at restoring the exercise of the most basic human rights in the most marginalized social sectors — such as families experiencing extreme poverty, destitution, abandonment and other social dangers; and children, adolescents, migrant workers, women heads of household and indigenous people.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have also drafted complementary projects, such as the national system for the selection of beneficiaries, aimed at providing flexible, transparent and decentralized assistance to the neediest families and households, and the system to follow up and assess policies and social programmes designed to evaluate on an ongoing basis the efficiency and real effectiveness of policies and public spending on social programmes.

We have also initiated compensatory programmes targeting the most dispossessed groups of the population; the family as a basic unit of society; education; and increased job opportunities, and aimed at strengthening civil society with a view to increasing opportunities for participation. Special mention should be made of our Bolivar 2000 plan, an initiative of the Presidency of the Republic to provide resources and professional and logistical capabilities from the armed forces to the population in order to establish an integrated social-service programme aimed, *inter alia*, at the provision of timely assistance to meet the people's basic needs and at rehabilitating the social infrastructure.

Lastly, a series of programmes has been designed as axes from which we may begin to provide medium- and long-term solutions to the social problems of the population as a whole and of the neediest in particular.

These axes include social participation; children at social risk; student aid; a women's bank; the sons of the homeland; Bolivarian schools; technical and industrial schools; a united school programme; a national housing plan; and the united social fund. The latter will direct part of the surplus revenue flowing from our fiscal policies and will balance social investment with macroeconomic stabilization and the amortization of the foreign debt as a budgetary priority.

Education, health, social development, housing and production are areas in which the development process in Venezuela will be rehabilitated. In each of these areas, strategic projects are being designed to guide the drafting and implementation of public policy. This is a challenge to Venezuelan society as a whole. Our goal is to lay the foundations of a self-managing and competitive, yet humanitarian economy.

Our task is now and will be, first and foremost, our own responsibility. That is how we see it and how we wish to move forward. We do, however, welcome cooperation and international solidarity, since Venezuela's experience is no different from that of many other countries and the solutions we seek to our own problems can surely benefit from a consideration of external models and experiences with respect to one of the most heartfelt political aspirations of contemporary history.

In conclusion, I simply wish to reiterate Venezuela's commitment to the Copenhagen Programme of Action and express our conviction that the international community will effectively come together towards the achievement its objectives through the contribution of all, Governments and civil society, to making their goals a reality and to opening new prospects of hope for humanity and our people.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 drew up a detailed blueprint for actions by States, civil society and international organizations to ensure social development for all. Next June, the General Assembly will hold a special session to review their implementation.

The review process is already on. The first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee in May this year and the inter-sessional meetings in August focused on substantive as well as on organizational matters. During these meetings, we requested from the Secretary-General a number of reports which I believe would help us to find out how effectively the Copenhagen commitments have been implemented so far and in determining priority areas of action where further work is required to fulfil these commitments.

Today, we have before us the Secretary-General's report A/54/220 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. It contains updated information on the implementation and on preparations for the special session. I commend the Secretary-General for his concise and informative report. We also take note of the report on the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives.

During the past year, Bangladesh has, on a number of occasions, elaborated on the actions we believe should be taken at the national as well as the international levels to implement fully the Copenhagen commitments. In particular, during the Preparatory Committee meetings in May this year, we articulated specific actions that are needed regarding all 10 commitments of Copenhagen. Today I shall not go through each of the actions we highlighted. Instead, let me mention the broader areas where focused attention is a must.

The need for creating an enabling environment cannot be overemphasized. If national capacity is inadequate; if crime, corruption and the drug menace is overwhelming; if rights are denied to individuals and groups; and if appropriate legislation for social development is absent, the environment will remain disabling. The national Governments of developing countries are striving to overcome these obstacles. Their efforts will have to be supported through international measures; through effective cooperation and partnership among all actors in development; through better coordination among the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization for social development; through reform of the international financial architecture; through better market access for the products of developing countries; through fulfilment of official development assistance commitments; and through debt relief and transfer of technology.

The least developed countries, with their marginal economies, limited infrastructure and weak national capacities are in greater need of these measures to enable them to achieve social development. This was recognized at Copenhagen and should be followed up diligently. The least developed countries have also suffered the social

cost of structural adjustment. There is an urgent need to make structural adjustment people-focused by avoiding budgetary cuts for core social-development expenditure in times of economic crisis; retaining and expanding social safety nets; and ensuring that women and children do not bear a disproportionate burden of adjustment. Human security is jeopardized if structural adjustment programmes do not include social-development goals.

The negative effects of globalization on social development will have to be addressed. We must ensure that, in the name of open market and open societies, we do not increase disparity within and among societies, further marginalize weaker and vulnerable groups and reallocate resources in a manner that reverses the gains of social-development efforts.

Poverty eradication will have to be addressed by fully implementing the commitments we made. We have to address the endemic spread of poverty. The feminization of poverty is a particular concern to us. The most effective approach to reducing poverty is by empowering people through provision of basic social services; better distribution of income; reduction of the rich-poor gap; protection of the poor during economic instability; and helping the poor to help themselves, for example, through microcredit, and enabling them to participate in the formulation and implementation of poverty-eradication programmes. There is a special need to address rural poverty through the development of rural infrastructure, upgrading services in rural areas and public works for rural development.

We have seen that lack of resources is a key obstacle to the full implementation of Copenhagen commitments. Resources devoted to social development need to be increased. At the same time, efficient and innovative use of existing resources is a must for having better and cost-effective results. We believe that preferential rates for loans for social-development projects need to be established. The 20/20 initiative should not introduce further conditions, but should aim at ensuring increased resources for social development.

Full involvement of civil society and the private sector should complement the work of Governments and international organizations in promoting social development. The best results can be achieved through effective partnerships between Governments and civil society, and through networking among relevant actors of civil society.

Regional cooperation can play an effective role in promoting social development. In our region the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be drafting a social charter to provide a regional approach for social development. The SAARC countries have also launched a region-wide programme to implement the 1993 Dhaka Declaration on Poverty Eradication. Regional commissions are also of considerable significance. In the Asia-Pacific region, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has adopted a regional agenda of action, which provides a guideline to the countries of the region for social development.

In conclusion, let me express our hope that the Copenhagen review process will live up to its expectation and will be another milestone in promoting social development worldwide.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): First I take note of the Secretary-General's report (A/54/220) on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and express my appreciation to him for its submission to the General Assembly at this session.

In the last four years, since the Summit and the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, continuous efforts have been made at the national, regional and international levels to achieve the three major targets for social development set forth at the Summit: eradication of poverty and unemployment and the achievement of social integration.

Many countries have been working hard to resolve issues relating to social development in accordance with their specific conditions, and agencies and programmes within the United Nations system have been playing an active role in the international efforts to implement the Programme of Action. In particular, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific discussed at its meetings the eradication of poverty as a major agenda item and took detailed action-oriented measures.

While all these efforts have contributed to promoting the international community's awareness of the issue of social development, we all know that what has been achieved is far short of our expectation. Poverty and unemployment, the main challenges to social development, have become worse in many countries. Globally, the number of people living under the absolute poverty line has increased from 1 billion at the time of

the Summit to 1.3 billion, and the unemployed and underemployed number more than 1 billion.

It is clear that the root causes of the problems remain unresolved. In this regard, the situation must be thoroughly analysed, and further initiatives and actions should be taken to resolve the problems at this session, as well as at the special session to be held in the year 2000.

My delegation is of the view that the major problems of social development originate from the present inequitable international economic relations, which constitute impediments to the economic growth of developing countries. Social development is directly linked with economic development. Accordingly, eliminating the inequality now existing between countries of the world and attaining overall economic growth are prerequisites for the ultimate achievement of social development worldwide.

However, certain developed countries still pursue unilateral and prejudiced economic measures, such as high-profit investment and protectionism, causing great losses to developing countries in the fields of the economy and trade.

Consequently, the gaps between rich and poor countries grow ever wider. At present, developed countries, with one-fifth of the world population, are estimated to have 82 per cent of world export markets and 86 per cent of the world gross product, whereas 80 per cent of the people living under the absolute poverty line live in the developing countries.

Developing countries facing economic stagnation coupled with a debt problem have few resources to be directed to social development. Moreover, continuing disputes and conflicts taking place in various parts of the world add difficulties to developing countries in their efforts to achieve social development.

Certain countries do not hesitate to apply political and economic pressure, and even take military action, under the pretext of resolving disputes. This has a negative impact on, and causes serious problems for, those countries in and around conflict areas.

With the twenty-first century approaching, humankind now aspires more than ever to live in a new peaceful and prosperous world, free from any social problems. In order to realize such a desire, fair international economic relations, based on the principles of independence, equality and mutual benefit, should be established before anything else.

To this end, there is a need for developed countries to refrain from pursuing only their own interests, through highly profitable investments in developing countries; they should help the latter in a practical way to build self-reliant economies and achieve sustainable economic growth. At the same time, they should end protectionism and pay due attention to resolving the debt issues of developing countries.

In the meantime, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system should also do their part to support Member States in their efforts to attain social development, with primary attention being given to the needs of developing countries. In particular, it is important to ensure fulfilment by developed countries of their commitments to official development assistance agreed upon at the Summit, thus providing a sound financial basis for the activities of organizations in the United Nations system in the field of social development.

Resolving disputes is essential to creating an environment favourable to social development. In this respect, we believe that when measures to resolve disputes are taken, due consideration should be given to the possible impact and consequences of those measures for the social development of countries and regions concerned.

In achieving social development, it is all the more important for individual States to properly formulate policies on social development. Since socio-economic conditions and development levels are different from country to country, every State should be responsible for drawing up its own policy on social development in conformity with its concrete reality and conditions, and due attention should be given to ensuring that all people can equally benefit from economic growth and social policies without any discrimination.

The Government of our Republic has consistently maintained a policy of providing jobs, free medical treatment and free education to all people, even amid serious temporary economic difficulties created by economic blockades of foreign forces and natural disasters which have recurred over a number of consecutive years.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its hope that the current session and the forthcoming special session

will be seized as opportunities to seek more effective and practical initiatives for implementing the Programme of Action adopted at the Summit.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): On behalf of my delegation, I welcome this opportunity to address the General Assembly on agenda item 37, "Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" and on the upcoming special session of the General Assembly.

Furthermore, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the delegate of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the report (A/54/220) on this item, which contains updated information on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and the preparations for the special session and further initiatives, scheduled to take place from 26 to 30 June 2000 at Geneva. I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Kingdom of Swaziland to this process, which is aimed at meeting the challenges faced by our countries and our Organization in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting, as well as encouraging, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as mapped out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The observations made at the preliminary Preparatory Committee meetings for the special session, that the process of implementing the goals set at Copenhagen has been progressing at various degrees of tempo and success, with positive signs in several countries on problems of unemployment and poverty, demonstrate that capacities of countries differ. Needless to say, therefore, those countries that have registered progress are mostly developed ones. While many developing countries, including the Kingdom of Swaziland, have made major reforms in their policies, their capacity to implement these policies is greatly inhibited, despite the strong will to succeed.

The data collected at the first Preparatory Committee meeting, based on reports of national Governments, indicate that much still needs to be done in addressing the impact of globalization on social development. This is particularly relevant, given the fact that the international economic and social environment continues to be unfavourable for the developing world, and that the gap between the developed and developing countries continues to widen. Many developing countries continue to be faced with difficulties in their quest and efforts to integrate effectively into the world economy, thus suffering from the consequences of globalization. This process has had a negative impact, rather than the envisaged positive impact, on finance and trade, as well as on the social and cultural development aspirations of our countries. That is why my delegation regards as pertinent the request to the Secretary-General, in conjunction with the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and taking into account the reports of national Governments, to report on the impact of globalization on social development.

There is a shared understanding that future global stability depends on the ability of the international community to increase the momentum for economic development and the capacity of national Governments to improve the delivery of essential social services, such as health and education, and to create employment opportunities. Through the promotion of an accelerated pace of growth and development in developing countries, poverty can be eradicated.

Based on the commitments made at Copenhagen, most developing countries have moved forward at the national level in meeting their primary responsibilities. However, such efforts by the developing countries to fully implement the commitments are hampered by the lack of sufficient necessary external resources. Undoubtedly, the goals cannot be reached if all our resources are exhausted in the reformulation of strategies and policies, leaving insufficient resources for the implementation of the programmes. The United Nations is, therefore, the best body to enhance the support needed by developing countries from the rest of the international community.

In this regard, it is imperative that the international community should consider new approaches to international development cooperation, based on growth, stability and equity, with the full participation and integration of the developing countries in the globalization of the world economy.

The painfully slow progress made by most developing countries in this regard is evidence enough that most developing countries have not benefited from globalization, while it is recognized that other factors have contributed to the low levels of progress. Despite the fact that commitments were made at Copenhagen to provide cooperation and assistance, the support from developed countries has not been forthcoming across the board. Instead, a decline in official development

assistance has been registered, reaching a level below 0.22 per cent of the gross domestic product, thus representing less than one third of the 0.7 per cent which is the United Nations target.

I must sound a word of caution here. If this situation is not reversed so that there is compliance with internationally agreed official development assistance targets and with commitments made for new and additional resources, the goals of the Copenhagen Summit will become a fiasco and thus discredit the entire efforts of the United Nations in the process of social development.

In addressing all such factors, the General Assembly at the forthcoming special session should also find solutions to countries' lack of capacity to deal with damaging natural disasters and the adverse effect of frequent climate changes and drought. Again, developing countries often find themselves unprepared and hard hit, and thus left with no choice but to redirect available minimal resources for reconstruction.

Let me conclude by reemphasizing that most of our developing countries have taken the lead in addressing their problems, and that there is still a need for commitment by the international community to assist developing countries in capacity building, resource mobilization, financing projects and technology transfer, and by debt cancellation. It is then that progress can be achieved in the eradication of poverty. It is my delegation's hope, therefore, that the special session of the General Assembly to be held at Geneva on the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, and on further initiatives, will address these issues.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) *(spoke in French):* The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, adopted four years ago, noted:

> "We are witnessing in countries throughout the world the expansion of prosperity for some, unfortunately accompanied by an expansion of unspeakable poverty for others. This glaring contradiction is unacceptable and needs to be corrected through urgent actions." *(A/CONF/166/9, para. 13)*

The topicality and relevance of this assessment is apparent. Moreover, the wealth of nations has increased tenfold during the last 50 years, and international trade has grown exponentially.

The major challenge to be met in this fading century remains that of poverty — the central theme of the Copenhagen World Summit. Our joint action at the national and global levels should aim at the implementation of the 10 commitments made by our heads of State and Government. We are still far from having made tangible progress on the strategic objectives of those commitments, freely consented to by 186 States. My delegation welcomes, however, the fact that the United Nations and the whole range of international institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, have refocused their priorities on questions of social development. This change in outlook is welcome. It is now important to translate it into action through the allocation of sufficient resources for the attainment of the objectives agreed in Copenhagen.

To the extent that it can, in an economic context which is none too favourable, Senegal is trying to implement its national programme to combat poverty, with the support of its development partners. Adopted in 1997, after broad discussions with decentralized communities, civil society, the private sector and donors, this programme aims to improve the living conditions of the poorest population by increasing the income of the poor through the promotion of micro-enterprises and income-generating activities; improving provision to meet basic social needs; and establishing a permanent follow-up system on household living conditions.

In order to considerably reduce poverty, my Government is endeavouring to reform its economy, speed up growth and create an environment favourable for the development of the private sector, whose contribution to fighting poverty should be taken into consideration everywhere. My Government puts special emphasis on enhancing human resources, on basic education and on the decentralization of health services. We give priority to a comprehensive, integrated and participatory approach in implementing national and sectoral programmes to combat poverty. We have also just created a national employment action fund, designed, among other things, to reduce the pressure of unemployment and promote employment locally and for disadvantaged groups. The ninth national plan for Senegal's economic and social development, which is under way, also gives high priority to combating poverty and promoting productive employment and social integration.

The developing countries face many obstacles: the decrease in official development assistance; the low level of direct productive investment; the debt; and the difficulties that products from the South encounter in seeking access to the world market. Added to these are the major new challenges of a globalization not yet under control. As a result, there is an urgent need to implement the Copenhagen Summit's Commitment 7 for Africa and the least developed countries.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the Preparatory Committee for the special session to review Copenhagen has taken into account all these parameters. The report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development recognizes quite clearly that progress in the fight against poverty and unemployment has been slowed down by the economic difficulties which a number of countries have had to face, difficulties aggravated by the recent financial crisis and by various conflicts in Africa.

Thus, as was so well pointed out by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session in 1999, the international community has a deciding role to play in supporting action to eliminate poverty, promote productive employment, achieve gender equality and mobilize new and additional financial resources in order to guarantee the implementation of the agreed objectives of social development.

My Government welcomes the offer by the Swiss Government to host the special session on the evaluation of Copenhagen + 5, to be held in Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000, and wishes to express its gratitude to the Swiss authorities for all the measures it has already taken and plans to take to guarantee the full success of that session and to enhance the participation of developing countries.

I also wish to express my gratitude and support to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile Mr. Cristián Maquieira, for his personal commitment and availability throughout the entire negotiation process.

The agreement recently reached, on 21 September, on the arrangements relating to the participation of non-governmental organizations at the special session and on their accreditation points to easier negotiations regarding the substantive documents. My delegation hopes that at the end of the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, in April 2000, the Committee will adopt all the negotiated documents as a whole in a spirit of compromise. This hope is even more legitimate, as we have all reached an agreement regarding the non-negotiable nature of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Dealing with this item in the General Assembly is of particular importance because this will be the last time we discuss it before the holding of the special session to review the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development next June. This occasion presents us with a special responsibility towards reviewing and evaluating the status of commitments taken some five years ago and the degree of progress achieved at the level of the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

In 1982, 13 years before the Copenhagen Summit was held in 1995, Egypt recognized the necessity of formulating an integrated social development strategy in response to a slogan launched by President Mubarak, "Tomorrow's Egypt". Since then, Egypt has embarked upon reforming its economy and has implemented structural adjustment programmes to achieve economic growth aimed at improving the living standards of the Egyptian people while establishing social safety nets to protect the poor and vulnerable groups of our society. It is no exaggeration to say that Egypt began to implement most of the Social Development Summit's recommendations before it actually undertook to do so in 1995.

In reality, we are — as it were — trying to draw the map of social development in harmony with the Copenhagen Summit's recommendations by, first, attempting to strike a better balance between economic and social development; second, by improving the material and social prosperity of the individual while supporting family values to preserve the social fabric; third, by eradicating all forms of poverty; fourth, by fulfilling the basic needs of every citizen; fifth, by overcoming the barriers that hinder the participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in social activities; sixth, by improving the status of women and ensuring their advancement and full participation in societal and government services; seventh, by improving the status of children, for they are our future and that is the reason why priority was given to them in the areas of health, education and the environment in our development plans; and eighth, by encouraging businessmen and the wealthy to participate fully in implementing social development policies through contributions.

We have made tremendous efforts to achieve social progress in keeping with our Summit commitments. That is why we have earmarked 30 per cent of our budget to the social sector, namely, to health, education and providing for the basic needs of our population. This far exceeds what was called for in the 20/20 compact agreed at the Copenhagen Summit. I believe that the donor community also has to keep up its end of the bargain.

Since I have mentioned donor countries, I must also mention the vital issue of poverty eradication, which was one of the top priorities of the Copenhagen Summit that, in reality, requires the harnessing of both national and international efforts. While it is true that achieving social development, improving our economic performance and eradicating poverty are first and foremost national responsibilities, they can be successfully achieved only through the collective will and collective efforts of the international community as outlined by the principles and objectives of Copenhagen.

In the light of the follow-up reports prepared by the Secretary-General, it has become clear that some of the targets of the Copenhagen Programme of Action have not been fulfilled in the agreed time-frame. We have also noticed that the progress achieved in some developing countries in the areas of unemployment and poverty has disappeared because of the economic problems that have been experienced by these countries as a result of the international financial crisis and related developments.

In his speech before the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt mentioned the fact that the increasing marginalization of the role of developing countries on the international economic stage — especially that of least developed countries, most of which are in Africa — is a harbinger of new lines of confrontation between the North and South, as a result of unjust development and economic circumstances. This can have extremely negative effects on international stability.

Of course, globalization has its pros and cons, which means that all countries should take this fact into account in formulating their social and economic development policies. Because we also need to establish a mechanism to review and evaluate what has and has not been achieved by our development programmes — that is to say, our successes and failures — Egypt has begun to formulate a new social contract in the form of an integrated social development strategy in full cooperation with the State and civil society.

As a first step, an inter-ministerial commission for such development was established. A conference was held last May under the sponsorship of our First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, and with the participation of high officials of the State and prominent national and international experts. We organized this seminar in preparation for a national congress on social development to be held under the sponsorship of President Mubarak. We look forward to sharing our experiences with the Assembly at our next review conference of the Social Development Summit in the year 2000.

Egypt also heads the Group of 15 for the economies of developing countries, and we have presented a paper expressing the Group's views on a comprehensive employment strategy, which was submitted to the eighty-seventh session of the International Labour Organization and to the Economic and Social Council at its most recent session. This should be taken into account at our next review of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action in order to tackle the negative social effects of globalization as well as the financial crises.

The special session will be held soon, and for that reason we must redouble our efforts to prepare for it. My delegation looks forward in this context to participating constructively in the deliberations of the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Ecuador has on various occasions expressed its strong commitment to social development and to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The representative of Mexico, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, expressed our position in that respect. Nonetheless, I should like to touch on some national issues that I believe are relevant to our debate today.

First, I should like to underscore that the Government of Ecuador, in working to achieve human-centred development, had to take on the challenge of refashioning existing social and political mechanisms. Our globalized world demands it, as does the kind of planet we wish to leave to our children, for whose benefit we are working.

The Social Agenda adopted by the national Government, whose primary goal is poverty reduction, has lowered the national poverty index — the percentage of people living in conditions of poverty — by between 4 and 7 percentage points per year, from 62 per cent to

58 or 55 per cent. Our goal is to bring that index below 50 per cent by the year 2005.

The fight against poverty is being waged within a comprehensive framework of action in which social issues are inextricably linked with economic ones. In this approach, attaining the goal of poverty reduction requires joint and redoubled efforts to restore macro-economic stability, revitalize the national economy, ensure greater social equity, strengthen human resources and effect State reform as well as deep-seated structural change. Only action that is based on this integrated approach and takes account of the myriad causes of poverty will enable us to achieve our goal of reducing it.

Secondly, with respect to the principles of Ecuador's Social Agenda, we are giving priority, in the context of a fiscal austerity programme, to the following: solidarity with the poorest; equity and rights; social participation based on experience; social policy as a tool for economic growth and sustainable development; prioritization of decentralization, with a view to strengthening democracy; an emphasis on the quality of management; flexibility in implementation that takes account of local conditions; and cooperation.

Our Agenda has designated the following areas for social intervention: education and cultural affairs; health care and nutrition; the welfare of citizens; and employment. In the area of planning and decision-making, we are also focusing on a comprehensive approach aimed at social security and environmental protection.

It is important to underscore also that the amount allocated to social expenditure consists of 83 per cent national resources and about 17 per cent external resources — 16.3 per cent from external credit and 0.7 per cent from non-reimbursable external resources. This is clear evidence of the fact that we are fulfilling our commitments. However, we also recognize the importance of international cooperation. As we have stated on other occasions, we are seriously concerned at the noticeable decline in official development assistance and in overall international cooperation.

To conclude this brief summary of our Social Agenda, I should like to reiterate Ecuador's commitment to ensuring that social participation becomes a reality. For that reason, our National Agenda is based on an ongoing process of consultations, decision-making, follow-up and assessment of all the activities on the Agenda, with the integration, at the appropriate levels, of organized and non-organized groups such as those comprising men, women, different generations, youth, and indigenous and Afro-Equatorial peoples.

The Agenda also focuses on the participation of specialized groups of civil society in the organization and management of various kinds of public social services. These include community organizations such as women's groups, non-governmental organizations, churches, universities and professional associations, among others. The Agenda also emphasizes the creation and implementation of participatory monitoring bodies to ensure high-quality, user-centred public services.

Clearly this represents a tremendous challenge. We believe, however, that major achievements require time, patience and resolve. Every project begins with a cornerstone. In this case, we have a blueprint and are certain that, with the assistance of the international community, we will be able to complete the work.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation expresses its support for the statement by the representative of Guyana regarding the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The political will of the international community to implement the results of the World Summit for Social Development can be seen in the report of the Preparatory Committee. A common world strategy is being developed that is designed to achieve objective and practical solutions to growing social problems. I should like to refer specifically to the issues accorded high priority in the Programme of Action: the eradication of poverty, reduction of unemployment and achieving social integration.

Despite the positive results achieved in some countries in accordance with the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen, the efforts that have been made have not lived up to our hopes. We had expected better results for developing countries in the social area, particularly for the most impoverished. Current international reports state that more than 1.25 billion people, mainly young people, women and the elderly, live in abject poverty, deprived of drinking water and basic foodstuffs and services. Many of them suffer from disease and have no opportunities for education or employment, or have been displaced through violence or by natural or man-made disasters.

The difficulties encountered by many developing countries, particularly the least developed, are the result of limited financial resources and the burden of debt, in

addition to the disparities caused by fast changes in international economic relations and the liberalization of world markets. While we acknowledge these difficulties, we are convinced that we can eliminate such problems by working together at the national, regional and international levels to undertake joint projects for the benefit of women, the family, children, young people, the elderly and the disabled. We must modernize educational and health-care institutions and improve community services with a view to creating a just and equitable international environment that will lead to international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates has undertaken development policies and measures in accordance with national and international requirements, in harmony with our beliefs and cultural heritage and in keeping with the tolerant Islamic *shariah*. We wish to achieve the objectives of the Copenhagen Summit by developing our economic and social legislation and programmes, with a view to implementing ambitious social development plans that will optimize our human resources and improve and modernize our education and health institutions. We have also provided the financial resources necessary to reintegrate the elderly and the disabled into national development programmes.

We are providing employment opportunities to all our citizens, both men and women, on an equal footing, with a view to reaching a quality threshold in all areas of life where there can be interdependency in the family and in the community. The interest shown by the United Arab Emirates in this subject is not merely national, but extends to bilateral, regional and international cooperation with our development partners. We have helped in building hospitals, schools and orphanages in many developing countries. We have given soft loans to other developing countries. We have hosted many conferences, seminars and training courses on ecology, population, social affairs and other development areas.

In conclusion, we hope that the special session of the General Assembly, scheduled to take place in the year 2000 in Geneva, will be able to achieve the results expected of it. Countries should rededicate themselves to the commitments undertaken in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.